(b) and (c) Mechanisation of major road construction activities is necessary to achieve quality as per the specifications. However, labour is deployed to the extent possible.

Road proposal from Tripura

821. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal has been submitted from the State Government of Tripura for creation of an alternate National Highways from Kukital (Assam border) to Sabroom *via* Dharmanagar, Kailasahar-Fatikroy, Manik Bhandar, Behalabare, Khowai, Tehiamura, Amarpur, Jatanbari, Silachari, Rupaichari;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to sanction this important alternate National Highways; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In February, 2004, the Ministry has declared 7457 kms. of State Roads as National Highways. It is premature to indicate any time frame for further declaration of National Highways.

Fund allotted for North-Eastern Highways

822. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government have allotted Rs. 6,500 crores for development of North-Eastern Highways;

(b) if so, the details of the fresh projects proposed to be taken up; and

(c) the time-frame within which these would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir. However, certain important road stretches in North-Eastern (N.E.) Region have been identified for further improvement in consultation with the respective N.E. State Governments.

(b) and (c) It is too early to indicate details of the said proposals.